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JVB

John's Vo-Tech teacher said he is very fond of his teacher. John and a Schermerhorn fellow are the shining stars of the class. Back to our visit to the Hendrick plant: John's father (Jack) was on a break when we arrived and when he returned he was very pleased to have JVB and I there to watch him work. He is the kind of person who "must" be surrounded by people at all times, and so the fact that we were there pleased him very much. We were given another tour of the plant and I asked a great many questions which pleased Jack even more. It was all very easy and amusing. John and I looked for some of the dies that John's grandfather (John Peter Babermiak) made but were not able to find any in the area where they are stored. John was very excited by the whole visit. He showed me the plant with great enthusiasm -- he was as proud of the machines and their capabilities as if they were his own. He spoke of his Vo-tech training and of how he and his grandfather had worked together and how he had more or less promised his grandfather that he would become a tool and die maker -- as his grandfather was. John appears to be forced -- by some strange Vo-tech requirement or procedure -- into another area, or at any rate, prevented from entering the tool and die area by curriculum requirements. When John spoke of the fact that it appears that he will not become a tool and die maker, he mentioned that he was troubled by that because he said he feels like he is letting his grandfather down. I immediately pointed out that he should not feel guilty in the slightest and that I am sure his grandfather would understand. "I'm sure your grandfather would immediately understand. Were he alive today, he would be as proud of you as anyone who knows you. It would give him such pleasure, for example, to see you standing here, in the midst of machines that he knew well, explaining to me how these machines operate. It would give him such pleasure to know that you are interested in working in metal, and that you will probably get the Vo-Tech award this year. Your grandfather would understand. Don't ever worry about letting him down." My words worked. Instead of feeling guilty, John practically had tears in his eyes. It was a very gratifying conversation. It all took place in the middle of the plant -- John's father and his helper were working about thirty feet from us.